The Ancient East. III

THE BABYLONIAN AND THE HEBREW GENESIS

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Pennsylvania University is rejoicing in the possession of a tablet dug up in Nippur some years ago, which has now been translated by Dr Arno Poebel, who believes that he has unveiled the oldest story so far known of the creation of the world. The University tablet dates back to the reign of Hammurabi, about 7000 B.C. The record reads like a new version of Genesis, with the important difference that the Creator of the world is described as a goddess, and not as a god. Dr Poebel, who is now engaged on checking his translation, says the tablet depicts a goddess quite clearly, and speaks of two male gods as relatively unimportant.

THE ANCIENT EAST

No. III

THE BABYLONIAN AND THE HEBREW GENESIS

BY

HEINRICH ZIMMERN

The Ancient East

Under this title will be issued a series of short, popular but thoroughly scientific studies, by the leading scholars of Germany, setting forth the recent discoveries and investigations in Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian History, Religion and Archæology, especially as they bear upon the traditional views of early Eastern History. The German originals have been appearing during the last eighteen months. The English translations made by Miss Jane Hutchison have been submitted in each case to the Authors, and will embody their latest views. Short, helpful bibliographies are added. Each study will consist of some 64 to 80 pages, crown 8vo, and will cost **1s.** *sewed, or* **1s. 6d.** *cloth.*

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THE BABYLONIAN AND THE HEBREW GENESIS

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THE BABYLONIAN AND THE HEBREW GENESIS

From of old the accounts of primæval times given in the Bible have aroused a peculiar interest, especially since they became the centre of many and violent controversies on "The Bible and Natural Science." But now this strife no longer rages with its former violence; indeed, it may be said to have ceased entirely in strictly scientific circles. Most of us have at length recognised that the expression "The Bible and Natural Science" was from the outset a false antithesis; that biblical utterances regarding the Creation do not fall within the sphere of exact science, and that, on the other hand, certain actual or probable results of the investigations of natural science into the ultimate origins of things do not come into collision with the interests of religion, strictly so called.

An important factor in this revolution has been

the final overthrow during the last few decades of unhistoric theories regarding the origin of the Bible such as once prevailed even among scientific men. The older theory of plenary inspiration has almost everywhere been succeeded by a more correct historical conception of the genesis of the biblical books.

This change has naturally had a decisive effect also upon our conception of the biblical narrative. Once it was believed that in the early chapters of the Bible we possessed the record of a divine revelation concerning the origin of the world and of mankind, delivered to Moses and by him written down. Now we know that these chapters are rather the introduction to a great historical compilation from sources of varied dates and very varied character, which did not attain its present form until after the Babylonian Exile. As was often the case in early times this compilation was attached to the name of a famous hero of antiquity.

New problems have therefore arisen regarding the biblical history of primitive times, problems altogether non-existent from the older point of view. How are we to understand these stories? Are we, at least in the story of the Flood, to perceive traces of some memory of actual events; or are we, as in the case of the stories of Creation and of Paradise, here also face to face with a

myth, wonderful indeed, but without historic foundation? Further: How came these myths into being? What is their ultimate meaning? Do we possess them in their original forms or only as remodelled in later ages? Finally: Were these myths indigenous in Israel or were they of foreign origin? If so, of what country were they native?

Careful study of the Old Testament can and does in itself answer these questions up to a certain point, but the last few decades have placed at our disposal external aid of the highest value for the solution of these problems. One of the results of excavation in Babylonia and Assyria is that the Babylonian version of primæval history can now be compared with the Hebrew. In the ruins of Nineveh there has been brought to light the library of the last important Assyrian king, Assurbanipal (the Sardanapalus of the Greeks). Here, besides many other cuneiform remains of Babylonia and Assyria dating from the seventh century B.C., a large number of tablets were found containing the Creation and Deluge legends of the Babylonians. Thanks, moreover, to the discovery in Egypt of a collection of Babylonian clay tablets, the Royal Museum at Berlin is now in possession of a cuneiform text of the fifteenth century B.C., the contents of which have an evident relationship to the biblical story of

Paradise. And quite recently, in the neighbourhood of Babylon itself, there has been found a cuneiform tablet dealing with the Babylonian Deluge myth, and dating from about the twenty-first century B.C.

For the interpretation of these biblical traditions the simple fact that excavations have restored to us parallel traditions originating in a land so near to that of Israel is in itself significant. This land, moreover, was Babylonia—that Babylonia which we see more and more clearly to have exercised from the dawn of history to the times of the Persian kings and even later, supreme influence on the development of the whole of Western Asia; that Babylonia, the capital city of which was throughout millenniums the focus of trade and industry, the centre of art, science, and literature. From this point of view, it is antecedently probable that speculations regarding the origin of the world and of man first found expression not in the small and comparatively unimportant land of Israel but in the great Babylonian centre of life and thought. We will not, however, come to an *a priori* decision on the question of the origin of biblical primæval history on any such general principles, but rather make close examination of the materials from both sources before coming to any conclusion.

1. The Creation.

A general knowledge of the biblical story of Creation may here be presupposed; perhaps, however, it is advisable briefly to recapitulate its chief incidents, and to call attention to the special character of the documentary sources to which this account belongs. The first chapter of Genesis, the so-called first book of Moses, describes the creation of heaven and earth by the almighty word of the Creator, in solemn and simple language, penetrated by a sublime theological conception, though in phraseology suggestive of priestly learning and abstract thinking rather than the freshness and spontaneity of popular belief. In the first place we are told of the state of chaos in which all lay until order was made by God the Creator. It is characteristic of this primal state of chaos that the chief phenomena of it were darkness and water. Here and elsewhere the Hebrew writer calls this primæval ocean "Tehom," an expression which we shall meet again in the Babylonian legend of Creation under the form "Tihamat." Into this gloomy chaos, on the first day of Creation, the Creator first brought light. Thereafter he divided the primæval waters, which then formed a single mass, into two parts, henceforth to be separated

by the firmament. The meaning of this description can be rightly understood only by bearing in mind that in antiquity there prevailed the idea that corresponding to the earthly ocean beneath the sky, but above the vault of heaven (which men imagined as an actual and substantial vault), there was another, a celestial ocean. According to the first chapter of Genesis, the waters below the firmament forming the earthly ocean were divided on the second day of creation from the waters of the heavenly ocean above the firmament, and thus the sky was made. On the third day God commanded the dry land to appear, thus creating the earth, which, at the divine command, forthwith clothed itself in vegetation. The fourth day brought the creation of the heavenly bodies—sun, moon, and stars—and we must note the special emphasis laid on the "rule" of the sun and of the moon. This points back to a system of belief in which the sun and moon were something more than mere lights in the sky, in other words to a society in which the worship of the heavenly bodies played an important part, in which religion was primarily astral. On the fifth day came the creation of birds and fishes; and, finally, on the sixth, that of beasts and reptiles; and, as crown of the whole, the creation of mankind. The whole creative activity of the Deity is confined to one week, during which God

works for six days that he may rest on the seventh, *i.e.*, the Sabbath, even as man does.

This story of Creation dates in its present form from a very late period. It belongs to a source of the great compilation that includes the Pentateuch, which was not reduced to writing in the circle of learned Jewish priests until during or after the Babylonian Exile; that is, it dates at the earliest from the sixth century B.C. Hence the strictly monotheistic tone, marking the conceptions of a later age, that pervades the whole chapter; hence, also, the somewhat dry style, betraying the learned author, the carefulness, approaching to pedantry, with which the separate varieties of animals and plants are indicated "each after his kind," an expression repeated some ten times in the course of the chapter. We must note, moreover, the purely prosaic form in which the whole is composed. This is not the writing of a man of the people who, in the golden age of a nation's youth, succeeds in giving expression in poetic form to the spirit of primitive life. It is rather the writing of a scholar of later times, anxiously striving in his study to bestow thorough and exhaustive treatment on all aspects of his subject.

And yet how many traces of its primitive origin may still be discerned in this literary product of a later age: Chaos, "Tohuwa-

Bohu"; the darkness on the face of the deep; "Tehom"; the spirit of God moving, or, more literally, "brooding" upon the waters; the firmament dividing the waters above from the waters beneath; the "rule" of the heavenly bodies; the conception of other divine beings besides the Creative Deity implied by the use of the plural pronoun—"Let us make man in our image"; the poetical form of expression retained in the account of the creation of man—"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

Certainly such characteristics are no mark of the work of a learned priest of the Exile; they belong rather to some good old Israelite tradition giving an account of the Creation similar to that contained in the first chapter of Genesis, but naturally in far more primitive form.

Is it possible by the help of other passages in the Old Testament referring to the Creation to reconstruct to a certain extent this earlier Israelite tradition?* There are in the first place in the poetical books a series of passages which refer to a struggle between Jahve and a mythical being personifying the primæval ocean. The name of this being varies, appearing as "Rahab,"

* In the succeeding pages the author has closely followed Gunkel's work *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*. Göttingen, 1895.

"leviathan," "dragon," "serpent," or simply as the "sea," more especially as "Tehom," the primæval deep personified. The separate incidents of the myth vary likewise, but through all one leading idea may be traced more or less plainly: in the beginning God, Jahve, had to strive with a hostile being personifying the deep, and the creation of heaven and earth by Jahve followed upon this struggle. The following are a few of the more important passages bearing on this tradition. In Psalm lxxxix. the poet sings the creative energy of Jahve in the words:

"Thou remainest lord, when the sea rageth,
When the waves
thereof arise, thou stillest them.
Thou has defiled Rahab as carrion,
With arm of strength thou hast scattered thy foes.
Thine is the heaven, thine is the earth;
The world and its
fulness, thou has founded it.
North and south, thou hast created them.

Here we see that there is a close connection between the overthrow of Rahab and the creation of heaven and earth by Jahve, for no reference is made to the Creation until after the fall of Rahab has been sung. In the struggle Rahab appears to have had auxiliaries, for we read of other

enemies whom Jahve scattered with the arm of his strength. These were scattered only, not killed, and apparently, therefore, they were more leniently treated than was Rahab, they being merely put to flight, whereas Rahab was slain, and not slain only, but in some way treated with special ignominy after death. To the fate of the corpse of Rahab we shall return later.

In Isaiah li. the prophet prays for some mighty act of Jahve that shall set Israel free as of old.

"Arise, arise, arm thee with strength — O arm of Jahve!
Arise as in the days of old, — in the generations of ancient times!
Art thou not he that shattered Rahab, — that defiled the dragon?
Art thou not he that dried up the sea, — the waters of the great Tehom?
That made the depths of the sea a path, — that the saved might pass over by it?"

The last words indicate that the poet was thinking of the passage of the Red Sea during the Exodus, but it is equally certain that his full meaning is not to be gathered from that allusion alone. It is much more probable that the cutting of Rahab in pieces, and the defiling of the dragon, referred in the first instance to the strife of Jahve with Rahab before the Creation, and only in the

second place to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea.

In this connection may be noted also the passage in Job xxvi. where it is said of God :

" By his power hath he stilled the sea,
By his understanding hath he shattered Rahab,
His hand hath defiled the wreathèd serpent."

In chapter ix. of the same book the poet speaks of mighty beings, auxiliaries of Rahab, who once bowed under the wrath of God.

The part played by Rahab in the passages above quoted is elsewhere attributed to " leviathan." So in Psalm lxxiv. :

" But thou Jahve art my king from of old,
That doest salvation in the midst of the earth !
Thou hast divided the sea with might ;
Hast broken the heads of the dragons in the water.
Thou hast bruised the heads of leviathan ;
Gavedst him for meat, for food to the jackals. . . .
Thine is the day, and thine is the night ;
Thou hast established moon and sun.
Thou hast appointed all powers of the earth ;
Summer and winter, them hast thou formed."

Here again we have the same connection between the slaying of the dragon and the creation of the world.

These and a whole series of passages in the Old Testament show unequivocally that there existed in Israel a very lively tradition of the story of Creation, according to which Creation itself was preceded by a struggle between Jahve and a dragon, the personification of the deep, the "Tehom." Moreover, this form of the myth is evidently the earlier, because the more primitive, even though the passages in which it occurs assumed their present literary form at a later date. In these allusions from poetical books of the Old Testament the mythological picture is still presented with freshness. Jahve marches out to fight with the dragon and its helpers; with the sword in his hand he shatters its head—in one version its heads—while its helpers fall in terror at his feet. With the destruction of the dragon, the "Tehom," the primæval waters, the work of Jahve as creator of the world begins. We are justified, therefore, in speaking of an ancient Israelite Jahve-Tehom myth, as for the sake of brevity it may be called, and in regarding it both as anterior to and bound up with the biblical story of Creation.

To the myth in detail there is no further explicit reference in the first chapter of Genesis.

So crude a mythological conception as that of the strife of Jahve with the "Tehom" would no longer be tolerated in the hierarchical circles whence this chapter issued in its present form; at that time and in such societies religious ideas had already become too refined. It may certainly be admitted that from the strictly religious point of view the first chapter of Genesis ranks much higher than those passages of the Old Testament which deal with Creation according to the Jahve-Tehom myth. From the purely historical point of view however, the latter is in many respects the more valuable, exhibiting as it does the older Israelite tradition. In fact, the case stands as follows: The story in the first chapter of Genesis is founded on the Jahve-Tehom myth; hence the many primitive features, easily discerned even under their comparatively modern garb. As far as possible those incidents were excluded that jarred with the purer theological conceptions of a later age. Thus, at the very outset, the story of the fight between Jahve and the dragon is suppressed. But the suppression was not completely successful: in the mention of the "Tehom" and the account of the separation of this same Tehom into the waters above the heavens and the waters below the heavens, there is a slight, but distinctly recognisable, trace of the original story.

Having briefly reviewed the Bible story of

Creation in its earlier and later forms, let us now turn our attention to the Babylonian myth. The knowledge of the existence of a remarkable Babylonian legend of Creation was kept alive by various allusions contained in Greek writings, until the recovery of Babylonian antiquity by means of excavations made during the last fifty or sixty years. Eusebius, for instance, one of the fathers of the Church, refers to the work of a Babylonian priest, Berossus, who, about 300 B.C., wrote three books in Greek on the subject of his native land. These books have unfortunately been lost, so that all we know of them is derived from a few chance extracts given by Eusebius, Josephus, and others. According to Eusebius the Babylonian Berossus says:

"There was once a time in which the All was darkness and water. In it were brought forth beings of strange form, for there were men with two wings, some even with four wings and two faces. (Here follows a more detailed description of the state of chaos.) But over them all ruled a woman named "Thamte," *i.e.*, the sea. At this stage of the universe Bel appeared, cut the woman asunder, and made out of one half of her earth, and out of the other heaven, and destroyed the living creatures that were with her. When Bel saw that the land was barren and uninhabited, he commanded that one of the gods should be beheaded, and to mix the flowing blood with earth, and so to form men and animals. But Bel created also the stars, the sun, the moon, and the five planets."

The accuracy of this brief sketch of the Babylonian story of Creation, as told by Berossus, has been fully confirmed by the Creation epic found written in cuneiform in the clay-tablet library of Assurbanipal (Sardanapalus). Unfortunately there are still many important lacunæ in the text as we have it at present; nevertheless, it is already possible to trace the main outline of the narrative. As might be expected, in a myth of this kind, the form is poetical and epic.

The Babylonian epic of Creation begins:

"Of old, when above, the heaven was unnamed,
Beneath, the earth bore not any name,
While yet the ocean,
the primæval, their begetter,
The primæval
source, Tihamat, mother of them all,
Their waters in one mingled together, . . .
Then appeared the first of the gods."

In other words: In the beginning, before the creation of heaven and earth, there existed the primæval waters only, personified here as male and female. The latter bears the name "Tihamat," the same name in Babylonian form as the biblical "Tehom." Later on there is a full account of the origin of the gods, special prominence being given to the birth of Marduk, who was subsequently regarded as the creative god. This is the Merodach of the Bible, who bore the cognomen "Bel," "the lord," and is often mentioned,

as in Berossus, by that title alone. By this name also he is known to us in the Old Testament, and especially in the apocryphal book entitled "The Story of Bel and the Dragon."

But soon there arose dissension among the new born gods. Tihamat, their mother, discontented with the new order of things, rebelled against the higher powers and succeeded in gaining some adherents from among them. Moreover, she created monsters to help her in the struggle. This rebellion called for vengeance, but none of the gods ventured to give battle to Tihamat till, at last, Marduk (Merodach) offered himself under the condition that after defeating Tihamat he should become the ruler of the universe. In solemn assembly the gods promised him this:

"Thou Marduk shalt be honoured among the great gods,
Thy lot is unequalled, Heaven's god is thy name.
From this hour onward, thy command shall prevail,
To exalt and to abase lie in thine hand!
Fast stand thy word, inviolable thy behest;
None of the gods trespass on thy domain!"
Since thou, O Marduk! our avenger wilt be,
We grant thee the dominion over the whole of all things!
Sittest thou in council, be thy word the foremost;

Thy weapon victorious, smiting the foe!
Of him, Lord, who trusts thee, spare thou the life;
But the god who plans evil, pour thou his life forth!"

Marduk then showed the wonder-working might of his word on a small scale as a sign of his power to do great things in future—namely, to call into being heaven and earth. A robe laid down in the midst of the gods vanished and reappeared at the command of Marduk. The gods then addressed him thus:

"Going and coming, command and they are so;
At the word of thy mouth, disappeareth the garment;
Command it again and the garment returneth!"

With his mouth he commanded, disappeared the garment;
Again he commanded, and again was the robe there.

When such word of power saw the gods, they, his fathers,
Gladly they hailed him, "Be Marduk the King!"
Gave him the sceptre, the throne and the sealring,
A weapon unequalled to conquer the foe.
"Lo! now of Tihamat, cut thou the life off."

The tale goes on to tell in detail how Marduk, armed with bow and quiver, scimitar and trident, set out in his war chariot, drawn by fiery steeds,

to fight with Tihamat. As soon as they met, Marduk upbraided her for her evil deeds, and challenged her to combat.

"Come forth! I and thou will fight with each other."

Marduk was the victor; he plunged his sword into the body of Tihamat, slew her, cast forth her corpse, and trampled on it. Then he turned on her allies, overcame them also, and took them captive. Returning to the corpse he cut it in two pieces.

"The one half took he, thereof made the firmament,
Bounds set he to it, watchers he placed there,
To hold back the waters, commanded he them."

Held back by a barrier, the upper waters of Tihamat henceforth formed the sky. Just so in Genesis i., the first stage of Creation is the dividing of the waters above from the waters beneath by the firmament. This passage in the cuneiform epic is, of course, also the original of the story given in Berossus of the woman Thamte, whose body Bel cut asunder, making of the one half earth and of the other heaven.

In the Babylonian epic there follows a detailed description of the creation of the heavenly bodies —sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars—corresponding to the parallel statement in Genesis i. with regard to the rule of the sun and moon.

Unfortunately, at this point, in the cuneiform epic there is a great gap hitherto unfilled. Supported, however, by the contents of a few small fragments, the notice of Berossus, and the concluding hymn of the epic which recapitulates the separate creative acts of Marduk, we are justified in assuming that this hiatus must have been filled by an account of the creation of the dry land, plants, animals, and mankind. As regards the creation of man, we find from a fragment of a clay tablet recently discovered that the Babylonian story was really told as described by Berossus, that is, it related that the god of creation commanded one of the gods to be decapitated in order that he might make man by mingling divine blood with earth. The conclusion of the epic, as already mentioned, takes the form of a hymn to Marduk, recapitulating his creative acts, the creation of heaven, of earth, and above all of man, and hailing Marduk as chief of all the gods.

Having noted the principal contents of the Babylonian account of Creation, we can now compare it directly with the story of Creation as told in the Bible. In so doing we must keep specially before our minds the older form of the story in Genesis—namely, that of Creation as preceded by a struggle with a dragon, a form which, as we have shown, is implied from Old Testament data alone. Even apart from other

Old Testament allusions a direct comparison of Genesis i. in its present form with the Babylonian epic presents startling correspondences enough to show that Bible and Babylonian accounts are ultimately founded on the same myth.* According to both traditions before the creation all was water. The deep is personified as a terrible monster, which in the Babylonian version bears the name of "Tihamat," corresponding to the Hebrew "Tehom," used as the technical expression for the primæval ocean. The Hebrew word is employed without the article, like a proper name, thus indicating that in Israelite tradition also it stood originally for some mythological being. Both myths represent the monster as dragon-like, and in both there are variants implying that it had several heads. In Babylonian tradition there is also specific mention of a seven-headed, instead of the one-headed, serpent, a conception that subsequently reappears in the Apocalypse of St. John. In both myths the principal monster is supported by auxiliary monsters. According to the Babylonian account these powers of the deep were opposed by the gods of the upper world, among whom was Marduk, ultimately the destroyer of Tihamat. In the Israelite tradition also other divine beings,

* Here as before (see p. 8) I am again indebted to Gunkel for what follows.

besides Jahve, are occasionally mentioned in this connection, but, of course, as entirely subordinate to Jahve. The monsters of the Babylonian chaos rebelled against the higher powers, and claimed for themselves dominion over the world. This impious and insolent rebellion is a constant feature likewise in biblical allusions to the struggle with the dragon. Marduk, in the Babylonian myth, Jahve in the Hebrew, goes forth to war bearing a sword, with which Marduk slays Tihamat as Jahve Rahab-Tehom. The auxiliaries of Tihamat are more leniently treated by Marduk than herself, so, likewise, do the helpers of Rahab fare at the hands of Jahve. In the Babylonian as in the biblical narrative the corpse of the monster is forthwith treated in a somewhat curious way. In the former, Tihamat, the personification of the primæval ocean, is divided into the upper and lower waters. Just so in Genesis i., the dividing of the deep into the waters above and the waters beneath preludes the creation of heaven and earth. In both myths, therefore, the overthrow of the pre-mundane monster is placed in closest connection with the creation of the present visible world. In both the appearance of light heralds the new order of things. There is as yet no certainty whether the creation of light is mentioned in the Babylonian epic as a special act of Creation, the text

being at this point still imperfect, but Marduk was in any case pre-eminently the god of light, for he is essentially the Sun-god. Thus Marduk's combat is to be understood as fundamentally a struggle between light and darkness, even as Berossus had already interpreted the struggle between Bel and Thamte. Too much stress must not be laid on what seems to be an extensive conformity between the Babylonian and biblical accounts of the order of the separate acts of Creation: such a succession as sky, heavenly bodies, earth, plants, animals, man, is obvious. (It is true that in Genesis the creation of the heavenly bodies is unexpectedly placed immediately after that of plants, while in the Babylonian epic their creation follows more naturally on that of the heavens. Very possibly at this point in the biblical narrative an accidental alteration may have crept in at a later time.) There is, however, no self-evident reason for the fact that in both traditions the earth is created before the heavens, the inverse order being equally conceivable. For the rest we find nothing in the Babylonian myth as to the six working days of the Creator, and this is natural, since it is admitted that the Genesis limitation of the divine creative activity into the space of six days is not primitive. It must further be noted that in both recensions special prominence is given to the

appointment of the sun and moon as rulers of the universe, and that in both an important part is played by the wonder-working power of the word of the creative god.

In view of this extensive conformity between the Babylonian account of Creation and that given in Genesis i., together with the Jahve-Tehom myth on which it is obviously founded, we are driven to assume an actual historical relationship between the two myths. The explanation that Babylonians and Israelites thus figured to themselves the acts of Creation merely as the result of common cosmological conceptions, and independently of each other, can hardly be accepted. Still less can we accept it when we reflect that in Genesis ii. the Israelites possessed another account of the origin of the world altogether differing from that in Genesis i., and in which no mention is made of the deep as the primæval element, but only of barren, dry land, over which the fertilising water was subsequently made to flow.

Actual historical connection between the Babylonian Creation epic and the first chapter of Genesis being thus implied, the question arises, How is this relationship to be explained? There are in the abstract three possible solutions. In the first place the Babylonians may have borrowed their account from the Israelites; or both narratives may be founded on a common primitive

Semitic myth ; or, lastly, there is the possibility that the Israelites may have taken their story of the Creation from the Babylonians.

The first supposition—namely, that the Babylonians borrowed their account of Creation from the Israelites may at once be dismissed: from the historical point of view as regards both civilisation and religion it is simply inconceivable. The theory that the Babylonian epic and the first chapter of Genesis may be traceable to a common origin in some primitive Semitic account of Creation deserves more serious consideration, as the possibility of the existence of some common stock of myths among the earliest Semites cannot be rejected off-hand. Excluded however it is, since certain features of the story are inexplicable from the Israelite standpoint, while finding a highly probable parentage in Babylonian ideas. It follows, therefore, that we have to deal rather with a myth borrowed in later times from the Babylonians by the Israelites, or, in other words, that this myth was indigenous to Babylonia, but in Israel an exotic. It is not easy to see why it should have been supposed in purely Israelite environment that primæval ocean alone existed at the beginning ; and, indeed, the prominent part played by the sea and its personification as Tehom, Rahab, leviathan, or "the dragon," in the Jahve-Tehom myth, seems altogether foreign

to Israel. The whole myth, the combat of the god of light with the primæval deep personified, has in itself no Israelite local colour whatever, any more than has its echo in the first chapter of Genesis. It is impossible to explain from Israelite conditions why the question, "How did this visible heaven and this visible earth first come into being?" should have been answered by the account in Genesis i. According to all analogies the scenery of any such myth would be taken from the actual surroundings of the people with whom it is indigenous. On the other hand, Jensen has shown in his "Cosmology of the Babylonians," that the cosmology in question can best be understood from a specifically Babylonian point of view, and from that only. Hence it would follow that this conception and the myth embodying it were native to Babylonia, and borrowed by Israel. For the Babylonian the matter would stand simply as follows: He would say to himself, "The world must first have come into being just as it still comes into being year by year and day by day. Just as every spring Marduk, god of the spring sun, calls forth the level land that has been flooded by the winter rains, the deep, or Tihamat, so in the first spring, at the first New Year, the world came into being after a combat between Marduk and Tihamat." Or, Marduk being also god of the morning sun,

he might say, "As the sun every morning travels through the ocean, through Tihamat, and calls into being from the chaos of night first heaven and then earth, so did heaven and earth come into being on the first morning of Creation." Were we to attempt to construct the same picture from the standpoint of an Israelite we should soon recognise our failure. The cosmology must have had its origin in alluvial plains, such as those of Babylonia, not in the land of Palestine, nor yet in the Syrian or Arabian desert ; it also involves a special deity of spring or of the morning sun, such as Marduk was, and Jahve was not.

Hitherto we have attempted to demonstrate on the evidence of the Creation story alone that the narrative in the first chapter of Genesis is not of Israelite but of Babylonian origin. The demonstration receives strong support from the fact that the narrative in question is no isolated instance of adoption by Israel of Babylonian traditions, as would indeed be possible, but certainly somewhat remarkable. As a matter of fact, we have within the limits of biblical primæval history other passages of which the substance must have been borrowed by Israel from Babylonia. To these belongs especially the story of the Deluge, the Babylonian origin of which is much more obvious than that of Genesis i. Specific and closer examination of the stories of Paradise also, and of

the Early Patriarchs, reveals repeated instances of such loans from Babylonian mythology.

In the first chapter of Genesis therefore, we have to deal with part only of a large fund of adopted matter, and questions arise as to the probable period at which it was borrowed, and how we can place in its proper historic setting the mythological transference from Babylonia to Israel. It is obvious from what has already been said that such questions can hardly be answered in reference to any isolated instance, as, for example, the contents of the first chapter of Genesis; the whole context of the primæval history, and particularly the story of the Deluge, must be borne in mind. With regard especially to Genesis i., I would say that it is absolutely impossible to suppose that the Israelites first adopted this Chaos-and-Creation myth at the time of the Babylonian Exile. For literary reasons alone it might be possible, because not only the first chapter of Genesis, but all passages in the Old Testament dealing with the Jahve-Tehom myth, must, in their extant form, be assigned to a period as late as that of the Exile. But it is inconceivable in the history of religion that the Jews of the Exile, with their sharply distinctive Jahve cult, should have taken the myth ready-made from their heathen oppressors and placed it at the beginning of their sacred writings. Even the period of the

later kings, as, for example, that of Ahaz, who was friendly to the Assyrians and coquetted with foreign customs, is altogether too late for such an appropriation. The first chapter of Genesis, as also the Jahve-Tehom myth, is too peculiarly Israelite in colouring, too distinctively differentiated from its Babylonian prototype, to allow of any such supposition. We must rather assume a long development on Israelite, indeed on Palestinian soil, to account for its biblical form. Presently we shall see in greater detail how everything indicates that the biblical forms of the story of Creation and of other myths of primæval times must all be traced back to a period preceding the settlement of the Israelites in Palestine; then only could the Babylonian originals have been adopted by the Israelites.

II. Paradise.

Turning from the story of Creation in the first of Genesis to that in the second and third chapters, we find ourselves in the midst of an entirely different environment. Here, in the beginning, there rages no wild sea to be controlled before the world can come into being; desolate desert on the other hand, is the beginning of all things, and it is a flood of fertilising water pouring over the desert that first makes vegetation possible.

Neither do we find the stern and sublime conception of the creative God calling all things into being by the might of his word alone; we have instead Jahve, as the creator god is here called, labouring at the fatiguing work of creation. Jahve makes man out of a clod of earth, as the potter forms images out of lumps of clay. Then he breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. Afterwards he plants a garden in Eden and makes it the home of man, causing all manner of trees to grow in it, especially the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Through the garden there flowed the river of Paradise, which divided without into four branches. It is not necessary to describe minutely the contents of the two chapters, familiar as they are to us all from childhood; the chief points only need be briefly enumerated. These are: the command of Jahve not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the creation of living creatures, and, finally, of woman out of a rib from the body of man. Then follows the wonderful description of the scene under the tree, the serpent as tempter, the transgression of the divine prohibition, first by the woman, afterwards by the man, the terror and flight of both from before Jahve as he walked in the garden in the cool of day; the question "Where art thou?"; the attempts at excuse on the part of the man and woman; the cursing of

the snake, of the natural functions of woman and of the labour of man; finally, the banishment of both man and woman from the garden of Eden, which was henceforth to be guarded by cherubim to bar the way to the tree of life. Here every line breathes the spirit of wondrous and genuine folk-poetry. It is one of the finest examples of the older Hebrew literature, and at the same time a story which, with marvellous delicacy and penetrated by deep religious feeling, attempts to find an answer to the questions, "How came suffering upon mankind?" "What brought about death and all the misery of life?" He must indeed be insensible to poetry who fails to feel the beauty and true inwardness of the myth, for poetry, of course, it is, and in no sense history.

The reason for the great contrast, even in point of style, between the story of Paradise in Genesis ii. and iii. and that given in the first chapter of Genesis, lies in the fact that the former is derived from one of the earlier sources of the great compilation known as the Pentateuch. It is part of the narrative known as the Jahvistic, on account of its consistent employment of the divine name "Jahve" instead of the "Elohim" used in the other documentary sources, and especially in those from which the sacerdotal writings, including the first chapter of Genesis, are derived. The Jahvistic narrative belongs to the golden

prime of Hebrew history, the time of the kings of the seventh or eighth century B.C., and has preserved for us the old Hebrew legends, particularly those dealing with primæval times, in a form much more genuine and primitive than we find in later writings of priests of the Exile. The original colouring of a mythological picture is far fresher in Genesis ii. and iii. than in Genesis i., where everything has been toned down. For the same reason it is easily comprehensible why "the beginning" is conceived in the one account as a waterless desert, and in the other as a weltering deep. We have, in fact, to deal with two originally distinct mythological traditions, each current independently in Israel, one of which must have arisen in a land of great rivers, the other in a desert; one was embodied in the one documentary source and the second in another.

In order to arrive at a better understanding of the story of Paradise and its Babylonian parallels presently to be considered, we must first recognise that certain portions of the narrative are later graftings on to the main stem of Genesis ii. and iii. To this class belongs especially the detailed description of the site of Paradise. Obviously the original story dealt with one river only, adding, perhaps, that on leaving the Garden of Eden this river divided into four branches.

Such a statement did not satisfy a later generation, which strove to indicate more exactly the position of Paradise and to identify the four rivers geographically. Their attempt found expression in the later addition, which names the four rivers as Gihon, Pison, Hiddekel, and Phrath. Hiddekel and Phrath are the Tigris and Euphrates; Gihon is the Nile; and Pison—according to a probable conjecture of Haupt—is perhaps the Persian Gulf, often supposed in ancient times to be a wide river. Thus Paradise was imagined far to the north, at the unknown sources of the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Persian Gulf, and the Nile, and these rivers, according to a conception not unusual in ancient times, though geographically, of course, impossible, were supposed to rise from a common source and branch off from one main stream. It would be labour in vain were we to attempt to fix the exact geographical position of Paradise from these data. The very idea of Paradise implies that it cannot be exactly located: Paradise lies unapproachably remote from man. The learned glossator, to whom these additions to the original account are due, held this view. He himself, at the utmost, believed he knew that the four rivers branching off from the river of Paradise were the well-known Euphrates, Tigris, Pison, and Gihon; but the situation of Paradise itself is to him still

an unknown land. As Gunkel has shown in his new commentary on Genesis, other passages in the Bible would lead us to understand that, in the original form of the myth, Paradise was not supposed to be on earth at all, but, paradoxical as it may sound—in heaven.

In the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel we read of the spring rising in the Temple of Jerusalem which became a great river and flowed to the Dead Sea. Of this stream it is said, "Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh." On the banks of the river are all kinds of trees with edible fruits, "whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail; it shall bring forth new fruit every month, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat and the leaf thereof for healing." From the whole connection in which this remarkable passage occurs, it may be assumed that the prophet has in his mind not any actual river with its source in the earthly Jerusalem, but a celestial stream of living water rising in the heavenly Jerusalem. What may perhaps be doubtful in Ezekiel is expressed in plain words in the twenty-second chapter of Revelation:

"And he showed me a river of water of life bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof (*i.e.*, the heavenly Jerusalem already named), and on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life,

bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Here we have representations of Paradise, quite in accordance with Jewish views of later and New Testament times, placing Paradise in heaven. In this celestial Paradise is the tree of life; there, too, flows the water of life. One fact in connection with the later descriptions is specially noteworthy—namely, that in these later accounts Paradise contains, besides the tree of life, a stream of the water of life. Here the later view evidently embodies the earlier tradition. In Genesis ii. we read of a stream that waters the garden; but from the connection, and by the nature of the case, this must certainly be the river of life, a necessary adjunct to the tree of life. The later account is also the more primitive in placing Paradise, the home of the Godhead, wherein are the food of life and the water of life, not on earth but in heaven.

There has been made known to us during the last few years the following interesting Babylonian myth. The document containing it was written in the fifteenth century B.C., and the principal portion of it now lies in the Berlin Museum.

Adapa, apparently the first man according to Babylonian mythology, was the son of the Sea-

god, Ea, who had created him and given him great wisdom, but had not granted him eternal life. Adapa dwelt in the sanctuary of Ea in Eridu, near the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates. There he fulfilled priestly duties in the temple of Ea, and also provided it with fish, which he caught in the sea. As he was one day sailing on a sea as smooth as glass the south wind suddenly rose and upset his boat so that it sank. In revenge for this injury Adapa broke the wings of the south wind, so that for seven days it could not blow over the earth. Anu, the god of heaven, heard of this, and sent a messenger to summon Adapa to account before his throne. Ea then warned Adapa beforehand as to what would befall him from Anu. "When thou goest before Anu there will be offered to thee the bread of death—eat not thereof. Water of death will be offered to thee—drink not of it." Anu's messenger came to earth and took Adapa up with him to heaven and through the gate of heaven. When Adapa appeared before Anu all befell exactly as Ea had foretold him, with the difference that instead of food and water of death he was offered food and water of life. Obedient to the command of Ea, Adapa refused the food and water, and thus cast away the gift of eternal life. "Food of life bring unto him," said Anu, "that he may eat thereof." Then they brought

unto him food of life, but he ate it not. Water of life brought they unto him, but he drank it not. Then Anu gazed at him amazed: "Oh, Adapa, wherefore hast thou not eaten, wherefore hast thou not drunken? So, also, shalt thou not live." Then he commanded: "Take him back to his home on earth."

It would, of course, be an error to regard this story as the direct prototype of the biblical story of Paradise, but it has so many points of close resemblance as to make it probable that it had a certain influence on the development of the tradition narrated in Genesis ii. and iii. According to the Babylonian myth food and water of life are found in heaven at the throne of Anu, just as in the older forms of the Bible story the tree of life and the water of life are said to be in heaven near the throne of God. Further, in the Babylonian myth—in the prophecy of Ea to Adapa, "Food of death and water of death will they offer thee," as compared with what really takes place—we have an antithesis precisely similar to that between the words of Jahve and the words of the serpent as to the consequence of eating of the tree of knowledge—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and, on the other hand, "Thou shalt not surely die." Lastly, we have in both myths the thought that when once man has attained knowledge

immortality only is wanting to his perfect equality with the gods. The third chapter of Genesis concludes, "Behold the man has become as one of us" (again a relic of the earlier polytheistic substratum), "knowing good and evil, and now, let him not put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever!" A corresponding reflection is attributed to the god of heaven, Anu. Ea has revealed the secret things of heaven and earth to the man Adapa (*i.e.*, he has invested him with the highest wisdom); what, then, can be added thereto, *i.e.*, to surpass the gift that he has received from Ea? The answer is, "The food of life"; but when Adapa refused this, with it he cast away the gift of immortality, not, we may assume, for himself alone, but for all his posterity also.

The idea of the food of life and the water of life as gifts of heaven rests on a Babylonian foundation, and is not the only one in the biblical story of Paradise that does so. To the same category belongs, in the first place, the creation of man out of earth. The Babylonian creator-god also makes men out of the soil, as the potter forms his figures of clay. Further, the part played by the snake as tempter and as enemy of God in Genesis iii. must certainly belong in origin to Babylonian mythology, in which antagonism between the creator-god and the dragon

or serpent-like Tihamat is so prominent a feature. There is in the British Museum an ancient Babylonian seal cylinder, bearing in the middle the sacred tree so often represented on such cylinders, and to the right and left of the tree a male and female figure plucking fruit, while behind the woman a serpent is twining up the tree. No cuneiform text relating the myth here pictorially represented has yet been brought to light; but it would not be at all surprising if some day among the ruins of Babylonia some such text should be discovered in which the serpent plays the part of tempter of the first man and woman under the sacred tree.

Despite these resemblances between the Adapa and other Babylonian myths and the story of Paradise, the striking differences between them suffice to show how characteristically the people of Israel moulded the older traditions of a polytheistic religion; how much more thoughtful and serious was their grasp of the ethical principles underlying such traditions; and how much more dignified and sublime their conception of the relation between God and man. Here we have an ancient myth already permeated by that spirit of ethical monotheism represented in Israel by such men as Hosea and Isaiah. For that very reason we cannot suppose that the Babylonian conceptions which we find in the story of Paradise can

have been adopted by the Israelites at a comparatively late period. We must rather conclude that, like the Jahve-Tehom myth, this also made its way in very early times from Babylonia to Palestine, and being found there by the Israelites was further developed by them in their own characteristic fashion.

III. The Early Patriarchs.

The story of Paradise is followed immediately in the Bible by the well-known account of Cain and Abel. On this latter, however, it is not my purpose to enlarge further: primarily it has nothing whatever to do with the antediluvian age, and therefore does not belong to the common stock of Babylonian-Israelite primæval mythology, but is of purely Palestinian origin.

On the other hand, in investigating this common Babylonian and Israelite primæval history we must take into consideration the two series of patriarchs which the Bible places between the Creation and the Deluge. The list in the fifth chapter of Genesis gives us the names of ten patriarchs, all living to a great age, some of them into their tenth century. It begins with Adam; upon him follow Seth, Enos, Kenan, followed by Mahalalel and Jared. Henoch, the seventh on the list, is represented as not having died a natural death.

but as having been translated into the presence of God after a life of three hundred and sixty-five years. Then follow Methusaleh, with his long life of nine hundred and sixty-nine years, Lamech his son, and, tenth and last, Noah, the hero of the Deluge. This fifth chapter is characterised by dry formality in the painful exactness of its statistical information, and by the absence of any of the fresh colouring of primitive folk-lore. The whole chapter, except the remarkable statement regarding Henoch, proceeds in the following monotonous formula ten times repeated: "Such and such a patriarch lived so many years and begat his eldest son. After this he lived so many years and begat sons and daughters; and all the days of the patriarch were so many years; and he died." Certainly this performance is hardly the model rendering of an ancient folk-tale; it is another example of the work of the learned priest of the period of the Babylonian Exile.

Turning to the immediately preceding passage, the second half of the fourth chapter of Genesis, we receive a totally different impression from another treatment of the same subject. One patriarch, we are told, built the first city, another was the founder of pastoral life, another the inventor of musical instruments, and still another "father of all who work in metal." Here we have genuine popular tradition. This is from the

same beautiful old source to which we owe such a masterpiece as the legend of Paradise.

We have been accustomed to consider the six or seven patriarchs of Genesis iv. (Cain, Henoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methusael and Lamech, to whom may be added Adam, as the first patriarch of all), as distinct from the ten named in the fifth chapter, and possibly also to distinguish the descendants of Cain as the wicked, godless patriarchs, a stock destined to perish in the Flood, while regarding the descendants of Seth as pious. A similar classification may have been present to the minds of the later editors of the Pentateuch, but certainly there was no such distinction originally; both lists relate to one and the same series. The names are in two instances—Henoch and Lamech—exactly the same; in other cases there are trifling variations in forms of the same name, as "Cain" and "Kenan" (or "Cainan" as the name is given, according to a still earlier pronunciation, in the genealogy of Jesus in Luke iii.), "Methusael" and "Methusaleh," "Irad" and "Jared," "Mehujael" and "Mahalalel." The order is identical, with the exception that Henoch and Mahalalel have exchanged places. Here, as is so often the case with the Old Testament and in antiquity generally, we are presented with the same tradition from two different sources and in two different forms. The list in the fifth

chapter of Genesis also adds at the beginning the names of Seth and Enos, and at the end the name of Noah, these being altogether absent from the list in the fourth chapter. From the evidence of the Old Testament alone it could hardly be decided which of the two lists is the more primitive. But once more Babylonia comes to our aid. Thence we learn that in spite of the many primitive touches in the seven-name list, the priestly scribe of the ten-name list has for once given us the older version both as to number, order, and to some extent even in the forms of the names. For Babylonian tradition also, as preserved by Berossus, tells that there were ten of these patriarchs who lived between the Creation and the Deluge, the last of them being the hero of the flood, like the Noah of the Bible. As might be expected, the Babylonian legend represents the patriarchs as primæval kings. Their names, as handed down by Berossus, do not here concern us, since effective comparison of the Hebrew and Babylonian lists can be made only by help of some knowledge of both languages. It is, however, possible to indicate approximately the relations of the parallel names in the two lists by means of two examples. The third patriarch is called in the Bible "Enos," the Hebrew word for "man." The third king in the Babylonian list bears the name "Amelon," the Babylonian word

for "man." The fourth patriarch is called in the Bible "Kenan," *i.e.*, "smith": the fourth king is called on the Babylonian list "Ammenon," *i.e.*, "handicraftsman, master worker." In the same way, as Hommel was the first to show, the remaining names correspond more or less exactly, at least so far as to make it clear that the biblical list and the Babylonian are fundamentally identical. Other characteristic details common to both lists teach the same lesson.

Of the seventh patriarch, Henoch, we read, "After the birth of his son Methusaleh he wandered in company with God three hundred years. And all the days of his life were three hundred and sixty-five years, and because he had walked with God, one day he disappeared, because God took him." A rich and diversified cycle of legend gathered round the name of Henoch. In later Judaism he was a favourite figure, conceived as a devout seer and prophet who prepared men by his calls to repentance against impending judgment. In keeping with this character is the prophecy of Henoch quoted verbatim in the Epistle of Jude. Henoch is also represented as a sage of old, possessed by reason of his communion with God of all knowledge as to secret things in heaven and in earth. Hence also he is regarded as the inventor of astrology, astronomy, arithmetic, writing, and all

cognate arts and sciences. We have indeed the so-called Book of Henoch, from which the quotation in Jude's Epistle is taken, a product of late Judaism written about 50 B.C., and in it the ancient patriarch is supposed to reveal in the form of a great Apocalypse his visions of the secrets of heaven and earth, and to prophesy as to the impending end of all things.

As I have lately shown in my "Contributions to the Interpretation of Babylonian Religion," we have found in Babylonian traditions the origin of this figure of the sage walking with God through the greater part of a life of three hundred and sixty-five years. Of the seventh primæval king —Evedoranchos, as the name is given in Greek form by Berossus, or Enmeduranki, as it is given in Babylonian—many tales are told. He was king of Sippar, the city of the Sun-god Shamash. The god called him to intercourse with himself, taught him concerning many secrets of heaven and earth, and especially the art of foretelling the future from signs in heaven and on earth. Thus Enmeduranki became to the Babylonians the prototype of the soothsayers employed in various kinds of divination, such as foretelling future events by examination of the entrails of animals killed in sacrifice, by interpretation of dreams, by augury, and, above all, by astrology, that is, the reading of the future by observation of

the movements of the heavenly bodies and the positions of the constellations. As Enmeduranki to the Babylonians so did Henoch stand to the Jews of later times as the father and founder of astrology, and, indeed, of all knowledge in heaven and on earth. His life of three hundred and sixty-five years—short compared with the great ages attributed to the other patriarchs—may now be explained easily: Enmeduranki being in the service of the Sun-god, to Henoch were attributed the number of the days of the solar year as the number of the years of his life.

Finally, there is one more item in which the ten primæval kings of Babylonia correspond to the ten primæval fathers of Israel. To both are ascribed lives of unnaturally long duration, larger even in the Babylonian narrative than in the Bible. The whole period during which these ten kings are supposed to have reigned, between the Creation and the Flood, is given in Berossus as four hundred and thirty-two thousand years, thus giving an average life of forty-three thousand two hundred years to each of the ten kings.

In view of these numerous points of agreement it must again be emphasised that between the ten patriarchs of the Bible and the ten kings of Babylonia an intimate connection undoubtedly exists. Here again there cannot be a moment's doubt that they are in origin Babylonian. This

fact is exemplified in a personality such as that of Enmeduranki-Henoch, strange to Israelite ideals but natural enough to Babylonian thought. On the other hand, the story of the Early Patriarchs also must have been long current among the Israelites before it could have developed into the two widely varying versions of the ten and of the seven patriarchs.

One more important question in connection with the patriarchs remains to be discussed—namely, why were they credited with such long lives? Formerly, on apologetic grounds, much effort was expended to show that in these primitive times, and when the conditions of life were so much simpler, the attainment of great ages, such as are recorded in the Bible, is quite conceivable. Of course this view cannot be seriously maintained, and we hardly need natural science to tell us that it is a physiological impossibility for any man to have reached the age of nine hundred years. But from the whole connection in which the tradition of the patriarchs appears, it is evident that it belongs to the domain not of history but of mythology. The question, therefore, resolves itself simply into the inquiry—What is the origin of these high numbers, and what is their significance? There is abundant evidence that speculation as to the age of the world played a great part in the life of antiquity,

especially of oriental antiquity. It was supposed that just as there is the ordinary solar year with its four seasons so there is a world-year of spring, summer, autumn and winter on a colossal scale. In this great world-year the Deluge had its special place, belonging in the nature of things to the winter of the world, the season of the shortest days, the darkest, and, on the analogy of Babylonian winters, the rainiest time of the year. On the other hand, it was natural that the Creation should be conceived as taking place in the spring of the world-year, especially among a people who, like the Babylonians, ascribed the creation of the world to the god of the spring sun, in their case to Marduk. What period, then, of the great world-year is represented by the lives of the nine patriarchs or kings from the Creation to the tenth patriarch, the hero of the Deluge? There can be little doubt as to the answer when we reflect that the interval from the beginning of spring on March 21st to the shortest day on December 21st is exactly nine months, while the tenth patriarch, under whom came the Deluge, represents the tenth month of the world-year. In the Babylonian system of numbers, as given by Berossus, it is tolerably clear that the ten primæval kings, with the years of their reigns, are indeed intended to represent the ten months of the world-year; in the biblical numbers on

the other hand, the evidence of this intention is obscured, but the same conception doubtless underlies these figures also. The reason for the comparatively few years ascribed to the lives of the patriarchs in the Book of Genesis is that the world-year, on the biblical reckoning, was much shorter than that of the Babylonians.

IV. The Flood.

The close connection between biblical and Babylonian traditions is most clearly evident in the case of the last legend falling under our consideration—that, namely, of the Deluge. Here we may conveniently invert our order of procedure with regard to the stories of Creation, of Paradise, and of the Early Patriarchs, and first briefly review the Babylonian legend in order in the second place to compare it with the biblical account of the Flood.

Even before the recovery of Babylonian antiquity by means of excavations, a Babylonian Deluge legend was known to us as preserved in fragments of the Greek writings of the Babylonian priest Berossus, which date from a time not long after that of Alexander the Great. The following is a brief outline of the narrative of Berossus :

"Chronos appeared in a dream to Xisuthros, the tenth antediluvian king, and revealed to him that on

the fifteenth of the month Daesius mankind should perish through a flood. The god commanded him, therefore, to build a ship, to embark in it with his family and closest friends and to take on board provisions, as well as birds and four-footed animals. Xisuthros obeyed, built the ship fifteen stadia long by two stadia wide, and embarked with his wife, his children, and his nearest friends. . . . When the flood began to abate he set free some of the birds to see if they would find dry land appearing above the water, but finding neither food nor a place to alight they came back again to the ship. After a few days Xisuthros sent out the birds again, and this time they returned to the ship with clay-marked feet. When they were sent out a third time they returned no more, and Xisuthros knew that dry land must now have reappeared. Then he opened some of the seams of the ship, and finding that it had run aground on a mountain he stepped out along with his wife, daughter, and pilot, kissed the earth, built an altar, did sacrifice to the gods, and then, together with his companions, was snatched away from earth. As they did not return, those left behind came out of the ship and called after Xisuthros. Himself they saw no more, but a voice was heard in the air exhorting them to fear the gods, for Xisuthros, as a reward of his piety, had now been permitted to go to dwell with the gods, accompanied by his wife, his daughter, and the steersman. They were also commanded to return to Babylon from the land in which they were, and which was a part of Armenia. Then they also sacrificed to the gods and returned on foot to Babylon."

In explaining the striking resemblance between

the Babylonian and biblical accounts of the Flood, especially in the incident of the sending out of the birds, it was formerly necessary to take into account the possibility that Berossus, writing about 280 B.C., had come under the influence of Jewish learning. This consideration may now be dismissed; thanks to excavations we are now in possession of the original account as written in cuneiform, and this, in the episode of the birds, agrees almost word for word with the biblical version of the same incident.

The cuneiform account of the Deluge, like that of the Creation, comes from the clay-tablet library of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal-Sardanapalus in Nineveh, where the documents were found during the English excavations in 1872. They are now in the British Museum. The following is an abstract of the cuneiform story of the Deluge:

The gods, especially Bel, resolved to decree that mankind should be punished for their sins, the punishment to consist in the destruction of the human race by a great flood. Ea, one of the gods, ordained, however, that Atrachasis (the Xisuthros of Berossus), a "very wise man" of the city of Shurippak, should be saved. He warned him in a dream of the decree of the gods, commanded him to build a ship, and to take into it living creatures of every kind.

"Thou man of Shurippak, build a ship,
Leave thy possessions, think on Life!
Forsake riches, rescue Life!
Bring life-seed of all kinds onto the ship,
The ship thou now shalt build,
Well calculated be its measurements."

Atrachasis obeyed the command of Ea, built the ship according to the prescribed proportions, fitted it with numerous cells, tarred it with pitch, and brought on board—besides his family and connections—wild and domesticated animals of every kind. Shortly before the flood, of the beginning of which he had been informed by a special sign from the god, he himself embarked and shut the door, while the helmsman undertook the guidance of the ship. Then came the Deluge, which is represented as a letting-loose of all the elements, particularly, however, as a mighty tidal wave and storm of rain accompanied by thick darkness. The whole land in the rapidly rising water soon became a sea where floated the corpses of the drowned. Six days and nights the flood raged, but on the seventh day there was a calm and the water ceased to rise. Atrachasis opened the port-hole and gazed on the desolation that had been made.

"Down he knelt, weeping he sat there,
Over his cheeks flowed his tears."

Then land began to appear, the ship was steered towards it, and ran aground on Mount Nissir. Six days it stuck fast, but on the seventh day Atrachasis relates :

"Then I let forth a dove, I let her go free,
Flying the dove went, hither and thither,
No resting place found she, back she returned.
Then I let forth a swallow, I let her go free,
Flying the swallow went, hither and thither,
No resting place found she, back she returned.
Then I let forth a raven, I let him go free,
Far flew the raven, saw the waters abating,
Eating and croaking, never returned he."

Then Atrachasis left the ship with his companions and offered a sacrifice, the sweet savour of which was well pleasing to the gods. Bel, the chief instigator of the flood, was at first wroth at the escape of Atrachasis and his belongings. But Ea counselled him never again to punish the sins of mankind by a deluge and the universal destruction consequent on it, but instead to use famine, pestilence, and beasts of prey for the chastisement of sinners. At last Bel was not only reconciled to the escape of Atrachasis but even bestowed divine nature upon him and his wife, and transported them to a far country at the mouth of the rivers, and to a life of immortality.

Compare this cuneiform story of the Deluge and the biblical narrative in Genesis vi. to ix. But in dealing with the latter it is essential to the correct understanding of it to bear clearly in mind the fact that we have to do not with one homogeneous work but with a narrative compiled from two different sources, though certainly with considerable skill. Here again the compilation is from two documentary sources, one the product of a sacerdotal writer in the period of the Exile, the other that of the so-called "Jahvist" writer of monarchical times; that is, we have here another instance of the same dual authorship already traced by us in the Bible stories of Creation, of Paradise, and of the Early Patriarchs. Here, as in the preceding cases, the work of the Jahvist may be distinguished from that of the priestly narrator almost mechanically according as one or other of the divine names "Jahve" or "Elohim" is employed in the narrative. But they are also distinguished by a great difference of general style, that of the Jahvist being the more unsophisticated and primitive, while that of the sacerdotal writer is as usual the exact and careful style of a scholar, clearly and by many touches betraying the work of a late period. It must however be noted that in the story of the Flood the sacerdotal author also has preserved many very ancient features.

The limits of our space forbid any attempt at

exhaustive comparison of the resemblances and differences between the two biblical editions; I must confine myself to indicating a few points specially important for comparison between the biblical and Babylonian versions in which the Jahvist and priestly narratives exhibit characteristic differences.

The most considerable of these discrepancies is connected with the duration of the Deluge. According to the Jahvist writer the actual flood lasted forty days and forty nights, during which time torrents of rain poured down incessantly upon the earth. There followed a period of three times seven days, during which the birds were sent out, before the waters so far abated that Noah could leave the ark. According to the priestly historian the flood—from the beginning until the complete drying up of the earth—lasted three hundred and sixty-five days, or a full solar year, and of this one hundred and fifty days were occupied by the rising of the waters. Further, the Jahvist source alone contains that characteristic incident of the sending out of the birds which so closely resembles the similar passage in the cuneiform. The same source also contains the account of Noah's sacrifice on leaving the ark, and mentions the acceptability of the sweet savour to the nostrils of Jahve. But the priestly narrative, which has, indeed, come down to us

in more complete form, also has touches that connect it closely with the Babylonian tradition, such, for instance, as the instruction to line the ark with pitch, within and without, exactly the same Semitic word being used for "pitch" as in the Babylonian account. As in previously mentioned instances, the priestly writer in this account also has preserved many archaic touches, *e.g.*, the appearance of the rainbow after the flood as a token of reconciliation.

The intimate connection between the biblical and the Babylonian legends of the Deluge is thus too obvious to stand in need of further demonstration; the only question is as to the exact significance of the connection. Here again there are, theoretically, three possible explanations; the Babylonians may have adopted the story from the Israelites; both Babylonians and Israelites may have adapted it from a common tradition; or, lastly, the legend may be native to the Babylonians and borrowed from them by the Israelites.

The first hypothesis—namely, that the Deluge legend was indigenous in Israel and borrowed by the Babylonians—must, as in the case of the story of Creation, be dismissed as impossible from the historical point of view, whether of civilisation or religion. It is enough to state that the Babylonian legend, the product of a

people well advanced in civilisation far beyond any other western Asiatics, existed at a time when the Israelites were still wandering in the deserts of Syria and Arabia as half-civilised nomads. Besides, we no longer possess the Babylonian story only in late Assyrian copies made for the library of Assurbanipal in the seventh century B.C. A few years ago there was found a clay tablet (now in the possession of a Parisian scholar) which, from the superscription and the whole character of the writing, may be attributed to the twenty-first century B.C., and that also tells of Atrachasis the hero of the Flood.

It is, however, in the nature of the case not impossible that a common tradition might lie at the foundation of the legend, both in its specifically Babylonian and in its specifically Israelite form. The usual argument for this theory is that the Deluge legend is one so widely spread that it may well represent a tradition common to the race, and related by Babylonians and Israelites each in their own fashion. In generalising so widely, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is only the Babylonian and Israelite legends that exhibit such close resemblances that some historic connection seems self-evident, as in the episode of the birds and other incidents. We must bear clearly in mind that

the immediate question is not that of the possible relationship of the Babylonian and Israelite legends with the other Deluge legends, but the relation of these two to one another.

A whole series of considerations indicate that the story of the Deluge was not indigenous in Israel but rather that it was transplanted from Babylonia. In the first place it may be ascertained by critical study of biblical primæval history that the most ancient Israelite tradition, and in colouring the most distinctively Palestinian, knows nothing whatever of a Deluge, but represents the development of mankind as proceeding continuously from the Creation, without any such radical interruption as the Flood. The Noah of this stratum of tradition is not the hero of the Deluge, but the first man who planted a vineyard, just as we are told in the same list that another patriarch was the founder of the first city, another the first worker in metals, another the first musician, another the first herdsman, &c. That the most ancient Israelite tradition that we can trace is silent concerning the Flood is a fact which in itself makes it seem highly probable that the Deluge legend was not indigenous in Israel.

Moreover, the Babylonian record of the course of the Flood impresses one as more natural and primitive than the two versions given in the

Bible. According to the Babylonians the actual deluge lasted only seven days, while for another period of seven days the ark lay stranded on Mount Nissir before the waters began to abate. But the Jahvist author speaks of forty days of rain followed by three periods of seven days before Noah could leave the ark, while the priestly scribe, founding his statement on a definite theory, reckons the duration of the Deluge at three hundred and sixty-five days. Many other points might likewise be named in which the Babylonian version is obviously the more primitive. Above all, however, we must note that the local colouring of the legend distinctly indicates Lower Babylonia as its birthplace. Whether the Deluge legend contain a kernel of historical truth or no, its outward form presupposes geographical conditions such as those existing in the alluvial land of the Lower Tigris and Euphrates, but not in any other country of which there can be question in this connection. Everything therefore points to the conclusion that the legend was indigenous in Babylonia and transplanted to Palestine.

What is the probable origin of the Babylonian legend? Have we here—of course with appropriate embellishments—the shadowy record of an actual historical fact? The possibility must certainly be admitted that the distinctive colouring

of this legend may be derived from experience of the devastating floods to which the Babylonian plain was so often subjected, and by which it was once perhaps almost overwhelmed.

But the ultimate origin of the tale, according to all ascertained knowledge of the evolution of traditions and myths, is not to be sought in any historical fact. The place of the Flood, like that of Paradise, was primarily not on earth but in heaven. The hero of the Deluge, sailing in ship or ark, is originally the Sun-god voyaging on the celestial ocean. The transference of the celestial voyage to earthly waters, and the substitution of a human hero for the divine, is quite on the normal lines of mythological evolution. We have indeed in that touch in the Babylonian version according to which the hero is finally carried away to dwell with the gods, a distinct reminiscence of the fact that the legend related originally to a deity. Such was also the genesis of the story of Deucalion in Greek, and of Manu in Indian mythology, as Usener has convincingly demonstrated in his book on Deluge legends.

The further development in which the Flood is regarded as a judgment on degenerate mankind is easily comprehensible, and here also Usener's treatment has thrown much light on the subject. The myth of a great judgment on mankind has no fundamental connection with the voyage of

the Sun-god, though in both myths the great event is a flood. Legends attributing the forming of lakes or the swallowing up of cities to manifestations of the divine wrath against sinful men are widespread. Among them we may instance from classical antiquity the well-known story of Philemon and Baucis, and from the Bible that of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Greek as well as in Babylonian-Israelite mythology the two themes were combined, and the Deluge—an incident common to both legends—was then represented as a judgment on the wickedness of man.

One question more remains for us to consider: What was the probable period at which the story of the Flood was adopted by the Israelites? In this case also it is not advisable to treat the question as an isolated one, since, as we have already seen, the stories of Creation, of Paradise, of the Early Patriarchs, and of the Deluge all rest alike on a foundation of Babylonian material adopted by the Israelites. The correct and systematic proceeding, therefore, must be to study these primæval legends as a connected body of tradition with which the Israelites became acquainted at some definite period of their history. It must, as we have already noted, have been at a period which was relatively very early, since in the most ancient, or at least in

extremely ancient parts of the Old Testament, acquaintance with this primæval Babylonian mythology is evident, and because a long period of development in Israel itself would be needed before the legends could take a form, so different from the Babylonian and so thoroughly permeated with the monotheistic spirit, as that in which they now stand in the Bible.

Until within the last twelve years we were not in a position to give a satisfactory answer to questions regarding the time and manner in which the Israelites became possessed of these primitive Babylonian legends. The case has been altered since the wonderful discovery in 1888 of the clay tablets of Tell-el-Amarna, a detailed account of which may be found in a former pamphlet of the present series. It is not, however, so much the contents of the letters then discovered that have important bearing on this particular question as the simple fact that at this early period—towards the middle of the second millennium B.C.—such active international intercourse was carried on between Babylonia and the west, especially Egypt and Palestine, and that the medium of this intercourse was the Babylonian language and writing. It was also Babylonian texts that served as exercises for Egyptians and Syrians in the study of the language, and something of the matter of these exercises must needs

have penetrated to the consciousness of the students. Fate had indeed decreed that a specimen of the mythological texts used for this purpose, and discovered at Tell-el-Amarna, should be no other than that story of Adapa which bears so close a resemblance to the biblical story of Paradise.

This then was in all probability the period, in the middle of the second millennium B.C., of the great influx of Babylonian tradition into Palestine, and particularly of myths relating to primæval times in particular. Such a date is early enough to allow of the long development on Palestinian soil that these myths must have undergone before taking the final shape in which they are now known to us from Hebrew literature. It must further be noted in this connection that it was in all probability from the inhabitants of Canaan that the Israelites adopted these legends, they themselves being still at that time outside Palestine, or at least only beginning to settle there.

To some readers of the foregoing arguments it may seem matter for regret that the progress of knowledge compels us to abandon opinions dear to many, and rendered sacred by the traditions of thousands of years. Let them remember, however, that the correct historical understanding of biblical primæval history, whatever may

be proved as to the precise method of its development, reveals in absolute clearness the incomparably high level of religious consciousness attained by Israel alone of all the nations of antiquity.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

George Smith's first announcement of his discovery of tablets containing Babylonian Creation Myths was made in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* of March 4, 1875. In 1876 he embodied the results of his investigation in a volume entitled *The Chaldæan Account of Genesis.* Since that time an extensive literature has been produced about the creation stories of Genesis and their relations to the Old Testament. The following may be selected as the most important.

The most complete publications of the fragments, with (German) translation and commentary are by Fried. Delitzsch, *Das Babylonische Weltschöpfungs-epos* (Leipzig, 1896), and P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-Babylonische Mythen und Epen* (Berlin, 1900). See also the articles, *Ishtar*, *Izdubar*, in Roscher's *Vergleichendes Lexicon der Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1896–98). The fullest and most authoritative comments upon the subject are those of P. Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier* (Strassburg, 1890),

and Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Göttingen, 1895). This latter work and the same scholar's *Genesis übersetzt und erläukrt* in the series entitled *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament* (Göttingen, 1901), are the last word of modern scholarship on these questions. Readers unfamiliar with German may be referred to Davis, *Genesis and Semitic Tradition* (New York and London, 1895), and Smythe Palmer's *Babylonian Influence on the Bible and Popular Beliefs: Tĕhôm and Tiâmat, Hades and Satan, A Comparative Study of Genesis*, i. 2 (London, 1897). Finally an excellent article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for July 1901, by Professor Morris Jastrow, jun., embodying conclusions differing slightly from those advocated in the present work may be recommended. Professor Jastrow is inclined to place the contact of the Hebrews with Babylonian Mythology at an earlier period than Professor Zimmern.

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